

An estimate of the area between the lines of control and the watershed apparently designated in the Indian proposal indicates that the Chang Chenmo Valley and the disputed area to the south must be included to approximate 2,500 square miles. India is therefore apparently proposing a new boundary along the watershed or water divide which would return sites of Indian casualties and require the Chinese to make territorial concessions.

[REDACTED]

An interesting aspect of India's proposal is that the watershed boundary is nearly identical to the line of control shown on Chinese maps during the early to mid-1950s. India bitterly complained during numerous diplomatic exchanges preceding the 1962 war--and later--of China's "cartographic aggression" after 1956 showing a new line farther to the west. This post-1956 version approximates the present line of control which follows no particular physical features. It is unclear, however, whether the current Indian proposal has deliberately taken into account the old pre-1956 Chinese claim.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

25X1

19 September 1980

SECRET

NEW SA REVIEW

Iran: The Ideology of Ayatollah Beheshti--Gleanings
From His Writings* []

Style

Beheshti writes in a more logical and coherent style than many other contemporary Iranian clerical and lay authors. Conceptually, he is more traditional than President Bani-Sadr and the late Ayatollah Taleqani, but he is more pragmatic than Qom fundamentalists such as Ayatollahs Khomeini and Montazeri.

Although much of his approach reflects his personality and intelligence, Beheshti's education--probably at the Tehran University Divinity School rather than at traditional centers in Qom and abroad--is reflected in his writing.

Unlike other fundamentalist authors, Beheshti shows a genuine interest in and knowledge of other religions, and he avoids polemic and bias, even on such an emotional issue as the Bahais. It is clear from his texts that Beheshti wants intellectual command of all viewpoints in order to defend most effectively his own. He is much more interested in drawing contrasts than in noting parallels between his own position and those with which he disagrees.

Rivalry With Bani-Sadr

Beheshti's essays add another perspective to his rivalry with President Bani-Sadr and the secular moderates. Beheshti, who received a rigorous religious education but is well read and sophisticated, relies on the

*This article is based on an independent contractor's translation and analysis of several essays on religious, political, and economic issues written by Ayatollah Beheshti in the mid-1960s and recently reprinted.

19 September 1980

8
SECRET

SECRET

Islamic intellectual tradition. Like many other moderate Iranian political figures, the French-educated Bani-Sadr combines Western economic and philosophical theories, a veneer of Islamic knowledge, and a strong element of contemporary Islamic socialism.

Beheshti uses a wide range of sources and is careful to do so without distortion. He uses the original Arab texts familiarly and quotes modern Arabic scholarly works as well as various Western orientalist to make his points. Beheshti is able to use original references in English and German. When Bani-Sadr refers to Muslim principles he uses modern Persian compilations of the original Arab texts.

Beheshti works logically from a thorough knowledge of Islam with traditional, conservative reasoning to conclusions that spring from Islam rather than any foreign source. Bani-Sadr, on the other hand, may personally be very religious, but his writings show that he approaches Islam as an outsider. He is familiar with the Qoran and with Muslim traditions, history, and culture, but he uses them as pegs on which to hang his brand of Islamic Marxism combined with modern French thought. He uses aspects of traditional Islamic thought to give coherence--and acceptability--to his own theoretical conceptions.

Beheshti on Islamic Government and Society

The differences between Beheshti and Bani-Sadr take a surprising turn when they discuss the basic nature of Islam--a notion that is central to ideas of how to make the Islamic Republic work. Bani-Sadr adheres to the common Muslim belief--espoused by the Qom fundamentalists--that Islam was perfect when revealed and the Qoran provides answers to all modern contingencies. He attributes the errors--"corruption"--in modern Shia Islam to traditions that arose in the 16th to 18th centuries and to the people's ignorance. This approach is close to that of Ayatollahs Khomeini and Montazeri, who assert that a perfect Islamic government existed at the time of Muhammad and his immediate successor and can be recreated through rigid application of existing Islamic laws and traditions, especially the criminal code.

19 September 1980

Beheshti, also arguing from a traditional framework, takes the less common view that reform and modernization are needed in Islam because even Muhammad could not foresee all modern problems. He holds that the Qoran is the perfect source, but that errors entered into Shiism not through historical distortions, but through human fallibility. The cure, Beheshti holds, is scholarly research, revisionism, and corrective reeducation of the masses--an endeavor to which he said last spring he hoped to devote much of his attention.

Beheshti says that correct and comprehensible Islam should be taught to the people under the guidance of a "central committee" of scholars who would travel frequently throughout the country to ensure that their interpretations of Islam respond to the people's needs. He adds that each member of this committee should be proficient both in the Islamic sciences and in modern Western methodology in fields such as sociology, psychology, and historical methodology.

In other essays, however, Beheshti apparently does not stress expanding the traditional curriculum. He notes the need for modern specialties--politics, medicine, and engineering--but sees them as peripheral. He concludes that knowledge in such fields should not increase a scholar's reputation in traditional fields, but also should not be held against him. This approach places him on his preferred middle ground between secular modernists like Bazargan, who advocate extensive modernization of religious education, and fundamentalists in the Khomeini circle, who want to exclude all but traditional learning.

Like Khomeini, Beheshti believes that officials like those on the "central committee" of scholars should put aside personal interests to work for the advancement of the Islamic society. He notes that such experts should be independently wealthy or be subsidized by the people. Unlike Talegani and Bazargan, he would allow state support of these experts--a proposal that the other men viewed as a means to official control.

Beheshti defines the true Islamic society as classless and says that one of the major aims of banking and

19 September 1980

financial reform must be not only the equitable redistribution of resources, but the elimination of a wealthy class with capitalist concerns. Unlike the Western-trained authors such as Bani-Sadr, Beheshti denounces the capitalist and class system on purely Islamic grounds. He defines a class system as one in which occupations are limited to specific, hereditary classes that are excepted from certain laws and declares that these characteristics would not be found in an Islamic society.

Beheshti questions the intellectual basis of concepts related to the role of the clergy in the Islamic society espoused by Khomeini and other Qom-trained fundamentalists. He leaves no doubt that he believes there is no mystical relationship between any of the contemporary clergy and the last Imam or that any modern religious scholar can be the spokesman of the Imam, both of which are central to the Khomeini mystique that the Qom fundamentalists are trying to establish.

Beheshti clearly diminishes the concept of religious leader and the value of any individual scholar's academic reputation by emphasizing the shared responsibility of the people and government to make the Islamic society operate. The government's role is to guide the people in cooperating to meet the social responsibility laid on society by Islam, and the people's role is to oversee the government's guidance. A secular government is acceptable, but Beheshti adds that it can and should be expected to function as an Islamic government responsive to the needs of the people and guaranteeing their freedom. An imperfect government, he says, should be opposed until a more just regime is installed.

Current Positions

Beheshti's political ambitions and the efforts of the Qom-based traditionalists in Khomeini's entourage to establish a system centered on Khomeini have led to obvious modifications in Beheshti's public stance. He does not address publicly ideological issues that would place him in conflict with the Khomeini line. He probably rationalizes his silence in terms of personal expediency and the best interests of the Islamic revolution.



25X

19 September 1980